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Melissa & Laura Houghtaling celebrating their marriage with fun and frivolity--and their orange VW "slugbug."  
Photo by Natalie Finazzo Fox of Rivets & Roses

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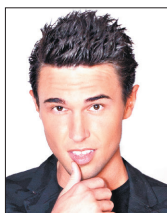
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# Celebrating Us

Welcome to the 2014 Spring Wedding Issue, “Celebrating Us.” Have you noticed how serious we’ve been these past few years? If these years had been summed up by a Chris Kluwe tweet, it would go something like, “So yeah, just getting same-sex marriage legalized. SO FOCUSED.” Sure, we’ve cracked a smile since the Governor signed the paperwork, but it seems like we’re finally loosening up a bit, seven months and 3000+ same-sex marriages after August 1, when it became legal in Minnesota. With this first Wedding Issue of 2014, now is the time to kick up our heels a bit. We’re emerging from one of the coldest, most wicked winters in recent history and spring cannot come soon enough. As the ground thaws, so can we. Like all the seasonal stories of rebirth from apparent death—whether the Greek God, Dionysus, and his grape vines coming back to life or the Easter resurrection story of Jesus or even Groundhog’s Day signaling the end of the cold and dark—we’re in for some wine, song, and sun.

We’ve had good reason to be serious. The rights of the GLBT community have been making great strides, with many more to come. Same-sex marriage passed in Minnesota and the federal government is recognizing these relationships on a large-scale more now than ever, but employment issues and rights for the transgender community members remain lagging behind. Hopefully, as awareness and visibility moved the issue of marriage forward for the community, they will do the same for the remaining issues, with plenty of support and demand from within the community as well. We need to move our issues forward to be able to celebrate our victories together.

Celebrating Us, the theme of this fifth comprehensive Lavender Wedding Issue, became apparent as I was pulling together the content earlier this year. Perhaps it’s because I’ve got five of these under my belt now, but it was a more fun process than ever not only because of what it’s including, but because of what it doesn’t include: there are no arguments or campaigns or pleas. The three wedding issues prior to the legalization of same-sex marriage in Minnesota were crafted to make a statement, as campaign pieces for the larger society. If someone were to pick up a copy who’d never seen a Lavender before, I wanted each Wedding Issue to not only represent our advertisers and stories well, but the whole issue and community involved with same-sex marriage. This one? There isn’t one bit of overt politics in the thing. A breath of fresh air. A sigh of relief. An echo of laughter.

Of course, the personal is political. Every couple editorially presented in this issue is either engaged, married, or coupled. So, inherent to every story and photo in this issue is the newness of laws that enable every member of this community—whether the couples in the issue or the couples that might use the advertisers in this issue—to cross the threshold into legal marriage. But we can cross that threshold with lighter steps now. It’s not as much of a march as it is a stride. Members of this community can move confidently into marriage, knowing that our state and our country are supportive of these unions, and hopeful that broad, sweeping legislation might not

be far behind us.

Please enjoy this Wedding Issue as much as I have enjoyed putting it together. As with each Wedding Issue, it’s separated into sections that include Thinking, Planning, Celebrating, and Loving; the stages that go into the whole process. It starts out a little serious, talking about prenups (hey, let’s get real) and then moves into the fun of nuptials: the planning, the celebrating, and the happily-ever-after. Okay, the “fun of nuptials” is relative, depending on who you’re talking to, but work with me. Just try not to laugh as you read through Nell’s piece about “How to Plan a Wedding (Without Getting Divorced)” that I asked her to write instead of her usual, cheeky sports column (which earned me a bit of a traitor status in these last months before her wedding). Go location scouting with Todd Pernsteiner and Shane Lueck as they show off fun venues that can include barns and wineries and theatres as whimsical wedding options here in the metro area. Let your eyes feast on the catering creativity of the new W&W Catering that Pat Evans introduces us to, making stomachs growl and mouths water. Consider the adventure of a destination wedding in Puerto Vallarta that Morgan Ross presents after touring various locations on a recent trip to Mexico and imagine the sand between your toes as you say “I do.”

Most of all, I hope you see yourself in our Wedding Stories and Real Weddings. The most important aspect to each of these Wedding Issues is to give examples of what hasn’t been presented before: same-sex weddings. We’re building a collection of resources for this community that helps those who could never “picture” themselves getting married. Whether seen by an adult who’s lived through a lifetime of personal and political struggles or a young kid who gets to envision his future groom, we have the people in these pages to thank for giving us their stories and experiences to show us how same-sex weddings can be done. And for those who are still looking for love, we know that we might find it online, like Laura and Melissa, or in the freezer case by the ice cream, like Michael and Stephan. Hope springs eternal.

Celebrate spring. Celebrate love. Celebrate each other. Celebrate us. ■



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*Andy*



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Judge Leon M. Bazine ruled, "Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, malay, and red, and he placed them on separate continents. And but for the interference with his arrangement there would be no cause for such marriages. The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix."

Today Texas (Tea-Party-backed) Senator Ted Cruz (R) echos Bazine, urging supporters to "simply pray" that GLBT Americans not be allowed to have equal rights because the *"thought"* [italics mine]

of same-sex marriage" is "heartbreaking." He wants to introduce a State Marriage Defense Act, undoing the civil rights of thousands because of his "thought."

Friends of mine (a same-sex couple) married this Valentine's Day. On February 14, 2015, they will celebrate their first anniversary of married life—and their thirty-third anniversary of meeting that day in 1982. In the first thirty-two years together they established a home, careers, and a respected place in the community.

I know or know of, many other gay and lesbian couples that have married in Minnesota since last August, a number of whom have been together twenty or more years. They didn't destroy society, or stain the "sanctity" of marriage during their partnerships, nor will they by their now state-sanctioned marriages.

Any marriage, for couples of any color, religion, or gender, is only as strong as the intentions and determination brought into the union. Marriage isn't for everyone, but it must be a choice open to all. I salute those who have or are about to marry in Minnesota. As Mildred Loving said, "That's what Loving, and loving, are all about." ■

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Thinking

{ **LEGAL** }

by Martin Swaden

# GETTING MARRIED?

—SERIOUSLY  
CONSIDER AN  
ANTENUPTIAL  
(PRENUPTIAL)  
AGREEMENT

I have been a divorce attorney for 38 years, so I have heard all the reasons as to why a couple decides against executing an antenuptial agreement. “We are in love, let’s not enter our marriage even considering the possibility of divorce.” “Executing an antenuptial agreement is an admission that our marriage will not be successful.” “You know that what is mine is yours, just trust me. I would never be unfair to you.” I fully understand the difficulty of discussing the possibility of an end to a loving relationship, but consider the following:

Ben and Chris met in college and began living together shortly after graduation. They moved into Ben’s home that Ben purchased 5 years earlier with money that he received from his family. Ben was able to secure a good paying job after graduation. Chris was only able to find part time work and was likely going to attend graduate school to make himself more employable. They pooled their incomes to pay for their regular monthly living expenses. Ben had excellent benefits from his employment: medical insurance, retirement benefits, a company stock purchase plan, and a health savings account. Ben worked long hours, so Chris was responsible for the majority of the work around the home. Chris was also very skilled at home renovations. He put in new hardwood floors, painted the entire house, and replaced most of the older fixtures with new ones. 20 years after they began living together, as soon as same-sex marriage was legalized, they decided to marry. Chris asked Ben if he would be willing to explore the possibility of executing an antenuptial agreement. Ben was hurt. How could Chris think that anything would happen to their long

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term relationship? Ben assured Chris that if anything ever happened he would be more than fair. Assets would be divided and Ben would financially assist him in the future. No antenuptial agreement was executed. 5 years after the marriage, things drastically changed. Ben was more and more consumed with his work giving Chris very little of his time. Chris was angry and depressed—his work situation had not improved and he was unfulfilled. Communication between the two became difficult, and arguments were common. Chris finally told Ben after unsuccessful marriage counseling that the marriage was not working and that they needed to divorce. Ben was irate and told Chris to leave the home immediately. Chris met with an attorney, assuming that the home and the other assets that had been accumulated over the 20 years prior to the marriage and during the 5 years of the marriage would be equally divided. He learned that since Ben was title owner of the home, and the home was purchased prior to the marriage, Ben was entitled to all of the equity in the home, except for a small amount attributable to the 5 years of the marriage. The same was true of Ben's retirement assets, his stock plan, and other premarital assets. The marital estate was quite small, and Chris would be entitled to 50% of it. Chris called Ben and asked if he would be willing to meet with a mediator to discuss a fair division of the assets, including the premarital assets. Ben said that the law was the law, and Chris would need to be satisfied with his share of the small marital estate. He suggested that Chris finally return to graduate school and get a job that would pay him enough money to meet his expenses.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 ➔



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## { LEGAL }

Could the above have been prevented? What if Ben and Chris had met with a mediator prior to the marriage and discussed the terms of an antenuptial agreement? Had that occurred Ben would likely have been more than willing to divide the majority of the homestead equity with Chris based upon the value of the home at the time of the marriage. He would likely have agreed to the same approach regarding his retirement plan and his company stock. Why not? Chris had shared his life for the last 20 years. Chris improved the home, maintained the home, cooked most of the meals, made the reservations for their vacations, and was in charge of entertaining Ben's business associates. They discussed and resolved with the mediator what would happen in the event of a divorce and also what would happen in the event of one predeceasing the other. They were referred to an attorney to assist them in drafting wills and met with an agent to discuss investing in long term health care insurance. Both had met with attorneys prior to the meeting with the mediator, and while they understood the applicable law, they were more interested in what was fair for both of them than the "letter of the law."

Antenuptial agreements are looked at favorably by the courts in Minnesota. As long as the agreement meets with the statutory procedural requirements and is substantively fair, the court is going to enforce the agreement even over the objections of one of the parties. Antenuptial agreements are not expensive taking into consideration

the possible alternative of an expensive and emotionally exhausting divorce. Most of the time two to four hours of mediation is sufficient and the remaining cost would be for an attorney to draft the document. If you are considering having an antenuptial agreement drafted, please meet with your mediator well in advance of the wedding. I would recommend at least six months prior to the wedding. I have seen too many cases where the couple waits until a few weeks before the wedding to meet with their mediator and when emotions are running high as the marriage date gets closer. Your wedding should be enjoyed, so address this well in advance. Most mediators will do a short free consultation with the couple, so that everyone is comfortable working together. I love doing this kind of work when a couple is working together to reach a fair and equitable approach to possible future circumstances. They leave my office happy and content. I cannot say the same thing about my clients who have experienced a bitter divorce. ■

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## HOW TO PLAN YOUR WEDDING (WITHOUT GETTING A DIVORCE)

"Any songs you want to request for our cocktail hour?" My fiancée asked. "The genre is '40-'60s singers, like Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett."

"Come On-A My House?"

"What? Who's that by?"

"Rosemary Clooney."

"Well, that's the last time I ask for your input."

"What? Do you know me at all??"

When I signed up for this wedding shindig, no one told me it would *literally* involve blood, sweat, and tears, as well as all my beer money. Or that it would slowly take over my entire life. Note that I'm writing a column on wedding planning and not sports news. Et tu, Andy?

After multiple trips up and down the basement stairs with boxes of fabric and paper flower bouquets, mason jars converted to candles, and painted books, arguments over whose third cousin once removed was more important to invite and which songs should be included on the DJ's "do not play" list, I feel I've learned a few lessons that might be beneficial for those who also feel the urge to say "I do."

### FIND SOMEONE YOU WANT TO SPEND THE REST OF YOUR LIFE WITH

You're on your own for this one, or at the very least – that's another column, another day. It was kind of a shot-in-the-dark for me – thanks, Plentyoffish.com! Success story!

**Lesson one:** *Online date and ask out the girl who doesn't ducklip pose in the bathroom mirror.*

### TAKE A LONG ENGAGEMENT

As far as I can tell, there's really no reason for us gays to have a shotgun wedding. Despite all of our efforts, it's pretty hard for us to have an "oopsie" that would necessitate a trip to the Lil' White Chapel. So, I would encourage you to take your sweet time as you plan your big day, unless, of course, you happen to trip and fall on a turkey baster. Or men, you happen to trip and fall on a surrogate. Oh, the horror!

A long engagement gives you time to scope out the best venues, have multiple tastings (hey, they're free!), save money, and dilute the wedding planning stress over time.

**Lesson two:** *Step away from the U-Haul.*

### BREAK THE NEWS

I took it as a good sign when my future father-in-law gave me pro-



Now hanging on refrigerators across America. Photo by Samantha Fronek Photography.

posad advice, which included taking a romantic walk and playing her favorite song in the background. I took one of his two suggestions and proposed in the dog park, because, stereotype. This all being said, different family members will react to your news in different ways. For our community, family reactions can be one of the major sources of stress. When you announce your engagement, it could be met with excitement, or it may be the first time your parents have to acknowledge (to themselves and to their friends) that you aren't just living with your "best friend" or "roommate" waiting for the right

guy/gal to come along! Give people the benefit of the doubt – you may be surprised at who comes out in support when you announce your impending nuptials. And everyone else? More beer for me.

**Lesson three:** *Do not let your family find out via Facebook. Though, it isn't official until you announce it on Facebook and change your relationship status.*

### CHOOSE A VENUE

In terms of practical steps, choosing your venue is the first concrete decision that needs to be made. The venue not only provides the atmosphere on your wedding day, but also will likely set your wedding date, based on availability. Simultaneously working on a rough draft of your guest count is important. As much as I would have liked, there was no way our exceptionally large families were going to fit in a brewery.

Visit more than one location – I ~~was dragged along~~ went cheerfully to five. The good news is, not only are the Cities incredibly gay-friendly, but they are home to some of the most diverse wedding venue options, from refurbished warehouses, garden conservatories, historical theatres, to lakeside pavilions. Being the nerds that we are, we jointly agreed to be married amongst the books of the James J. Hill Reference Library in downtown St. Paul.


**Lesson four:** *Let your fiancée choose something unique to her personality and taste, and your budget.*

### VENDORS

Nothing brings you crashing down to earth from the engagement cloud faster than being told how many acts are involved in the wedding circus. My illusions of putting on my monkey suit and simply saying "I do" were shattered as I was informed that we needed to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20 ➔





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## { ENGAGEMENT }

decide upon a photographer, caterer, make-up artist, hair stylist, wedding planner, photo booth, florist, DJ, musician(s), officiant, seamstress/tailor, tarot card reader, fire-breather. Like the guy in the alley tells you, pretty much everything is available for the right price.

I mistakenly asked my fiancée if a photo booth was really necessary, and she politely pointed out my mistake in that tone of voice only dogs can hear.

**Lesson five:** *To prevent headaches, defer to your fiancée for the previously listed items.*

### ENGAGEMENT PHOTOS

The good news is, usually your photographer throws these in for free when you book her for your wedding. The bad news is, all that time you thought you had to get skinny for the wedding has now been cut drastically short. My recommendation? Tapeworm.

**Lesson six:** *Hire a photographer well-versed in Photoshop.*

### BRIDAL PARTY

Since my fiancée has been a bridesmaid in at least twelve weddings, I was left scrambling for more brothers. Mom and Dad, why weren't you thinking ahead? In all seriousness, asking people to be in your bridal party is a great way to honor close friends and family members, and to make sure there's always someone there to hold your dress up when you're peeing. [Spoiler alert!] Or hold my beer when I'm rocking our choreographed dance.

**Lesson seven:** *Have more brothers.*

### GUEST LIST

Open an Excel spreadsheet and a large bottle of Jack. Prepare to barter. I traded two cousins for a college professor. She poured me more Jack and invited whomever she wanted.

**Lesson eight:** *Stay sober.*

### SAVE THE DATES

Since when do we invite people twice? No one is going to be able to convince me that a Save the Date isn't the same as an invite. But guess what? We still sent them out and my mug is now hanging on refrigerators across the country.

**Lesson nine:** *Learn that Save the Dates are not invites.*

### ATTIRE

I'm sure you're beginning to sense a trend in the above lessons, namely, "happy wife, happy life." However, my monkey suit was going to be *my* monkey suit. In the previously approved color scheme, of course. Worried I was going to be the lesbian in the awkwardly fitting suit, I was fitted, and at least not as awkward as the straight male taking my measurements. Turns out I need more tapeworm.

**Lesson ten:** *Put your foot down and use the Executive Veto. Wisely.*

### INVITES

"Quit complaining. Helping me cut these isn't going to kill you." Cue blood splatter. Funny how much deeper card stock cuts than regular paper. That ought to scare the next person using the die cutter at the paper outlet. Quick relationship evaluation when your fiancée is seemingly more worried about the four dollars of blood-stained card stock than your own impending death by finger hemorrhage. The price of DIY is steep, my friends. Order your damn invites on the internet. Or get one of the twelve \*@!ing bridesmaids over here.

**Lesson eleven:** *Carry Band-Aids. It's a jungle out there.*

I know this list isn't comprehensive. There are always more lessons and probably more hoops, but the most important lesson to remember is that you have the freedom to make your wedding your own. The beautiful thing about gay weddings is that they *aren't* traditional. (Or so they keep telling us.) We have the freedom to break traditions, play with traditions, and create new traditions that represent who we are as couples. While magazines, friends, and Pinterest are good resources, there is nothing you *have* to do. You don't *have* to have a bride and groom. You don't *have* to have a bridal party. You don't even *have* to have guests.

And while I may have painted my wife-to-be as a bridezilla-in-present (tongue-in-cheek, mind you), the truth is, I'll happily jump through hoops knowing that in two short months the stress will be worth it, the beer money well spent, and we'll have made a tradition all our own. And I end up with a hot wife. ■

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## { LOCATIONS }

by Todd Pernsteiner



(From left) Veterans Memorial Amphitheater. Photo by Todd Pernsteiner; Warehouse Winery. Photo by Lauren B. Photography



# DIVING INTO MARRIAGE HEAD FIRST

## UNIQUE PLACES TO TAKE THE PLUNGE

So you're getting married? Congratulations! Now comes the hard part, deciding where to hold the ceremony and reception.

Picking a venue is almost as challenging as picking a spouse – again, I said *almost*. The area's event spaces are as diverse as the residents are. Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and surrounding suburbs have several unique, hidden sites just off the beaten path that can make your day special. Best of all, finding the perfect location doesn't have to be like finding a needle in a haystack.

John Basill, President and CEO of Discover St. Louis Park, suggests using a city's Destination Marketing Organization such as theirs (DMO, also sometimes called a Convention & Visitor Bureau or CVB). DMOs typically offer complimentary services to assist in finding a wedding venue, reception site, and group hotel accommodations.

Best of all, they've done the legwork, so you don't have to.

Basill says an organization like his is great for helping find unique venues that people might not be attuned to. He also points out that DMOs are key to finding group accommodations. "Hotels will set aside a block of rooms for your group at no fee in advance, up until 14-30 days prior to your event. It's important to know how to secure the best rates for your group and that's how a DMO can help."

When it comes to event spaces, the west metro itself offers up a plethora of hidden gems ready to be mined. Here is a sampling of spaces that Basill says to consider.

### WINERY IN THE CITY

If you're a wine aficionado, you know a winery is a great site for both a ceremony and reception. What you might not know is you

don't have to travel out-state to find one.

St. Louis Park is home to one of the only urban wineries in the region. Nestled in an industrial area, this nearly five-year-old, working winery has found its niche in hosting spectacular events.

"The winery is likely unlike any other local space you may have seen," praised Basill. "Its eclectic décor and large open spaces complement each other well to create a warm, welcoming atmosphere." Warehouse Winery is an impressive 7,000 square foot space with 13-foot ceilings, interesting gathering spaces, and a seating capacity of up to 200. Their diverse catering menu, full beverage service, outdoor patio, and free parking make this a desirable venue for an unforgettable experience.

**Insider Tip:** Warehouse Winery's wines have won numerous national and regional awards. You are invited to the winery every last Wednesday of the month for their "Wine Down Wednesdays" – a great opportunity to sample their wines and take a peek at the venue.

### ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

If an outdoor wedding is more your style, a stage and amphitheater might just be the place to act out your love. Picture yourself as Romeo and Julio, or Romany and Juliet, proclaiming your undying admiration for each other – minus the tragic ending.

Veterans Memorial Amphitheater in Wolfe Park, located just south of St. Louis Park's Excelsior and Grand, has seen its share of ceremonies. The venue's tiered seating offers guests a casual place to comfortably enjoy the ceremony. Within feet from the amphitheater is a fully enclosed, climate-controlled pavilion with a fireplace and re-





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Photo: lauren b. photography



## { LOCATIONS }

**Figlio.** Photo courtesy of Figlio; **Showplace Icon Theatre.** Photo courtesy of Showplace Icon Theatre; **Rojo.** Photo courtesy of Rojo



stroom facilities. The pavillion seats up to 30 guests and overlooks a creek and covered pergola. Ample free parking is located within a short walking distance.

**Insider Tip:** *If you want to literally take the plunge, rent the adjoining Aquatic Park for the evening. What better place is there to capture memorable photos than a tandem waterslide?*

### MAKE IT A BLOCKBUSTER PREMIERE

You're the leading actors in your wedding so why not profess your love on the big screen! Showplace Icon Theatre at The Shops at West End in St. Louis Park is a swanky venue to do just that.

While the facility's primary focus is clearly showing movies, Showplace Icon has hosted grooms dinners and quite a few unique proposals. They have yet to host a full wedding, but just think of the possibilities; their state-of-the-art sound and projection capabilities would knock your guest's socks off. The theatre's adjoining Lobby Lounge restaurant offers a full-service bar and restaurant, as well as an intimate private space within.

As with any space, theatre rental dates and times are based on availability – and renting it will cost you a few pennies – but it could prove to be an epic wedding your guests won't soon forget.

### I DO, I DINE

For intimate gatherings, a favorite restaurant space may leave a good taste in your mouth. Many have beautiful, private dining rooms equipped with state-of-the-art audiovisual equipment – not to mention tantalizing food and beverage menus.

The new iteration of Figlio at The Shops at West End in St. Louis Park has a private space called the "Milano" which is decked out with a candlelit fireplace, rustic brick, dark wood accents and stained glass privacy panels. It can seat 72 guests or be split into two smaller spaces seating 24 or 48. Alternatively, the space can hold up to 100 for heavy hors d'oeuvres and cocktails.

The Shops at West End is also home to Rojo Room, a comfortable private space that seats up to 75 guests. Rojo Room's built-in projector, 192-inch drop down screen and digital sound system are perfect for showcasing a slide show or video presentation. Rojo's adjoining private patio seats up to 40 and gives guests a place to enjoy the summer air.

**Insider Tip:** *For a toe-tapping bachelor or bachelorette party, consider renting the private VIP room at Toby Keith's I Love This Bar &*

*Grill at The Shops at West End. The room accommodates up to 35 people and includes a private bar, plush leather couches, velvet-lined walls, and a soundproof window facing the live music stage.*

### BE GOOD TO YOUR GUESTS

When choosing a site for your big day, don't forget your transient guests who will need accommodations close to your venue, says Basill.

"We oftentimes get inquiries from brides and grooms whose out-of-town guests aren't comfortable staying in the heart of a big city," said Basill. "We proudly assure them we are 'comfortably close,' right off two major highways that connect the metro. Free parking, an abundance of local eating establishments, and nominal cab fares make our hotels and event spaces particularly desirable."

### CHECK IT OFF YOUR LIST

The perfect spot for your joyous occasion is likely hiding right under your nose. With a little research and some phone calls to experts in destination marketing, you'll quickly be able to check "The Venue" off your to-do list. Then you can move on to the most important task, choosing cake flavors. ■

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Celebrating

## { WEDDING STORY }

by Kathleen Watson

Photography by Natalie Finazzo Fox and Leslie Plesser from Rivets & Roses

# MELISSA & LAURA: STRUCK BY (OK)CUPID'S ARROW

Wedding Day—a day so important that it's often simply referred to as The Big Day. With marriage equality finally being a reality in Minnesota, more GLBT couples are finding themselves knee-deep in wedding planning—for better or for worse. Though it's easy to get caught up in the whirlwind of decisions and details, it's important to not lose sight of the most important part of the wedding day—the commitment made between two people who love and cherish each other. For their wedding in September 2013, Laura and Melissa Houghtaling planned their big day to spotlight their collective and individual personalities, and they kept their love and enjoyment of each other as the focus.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 ➔





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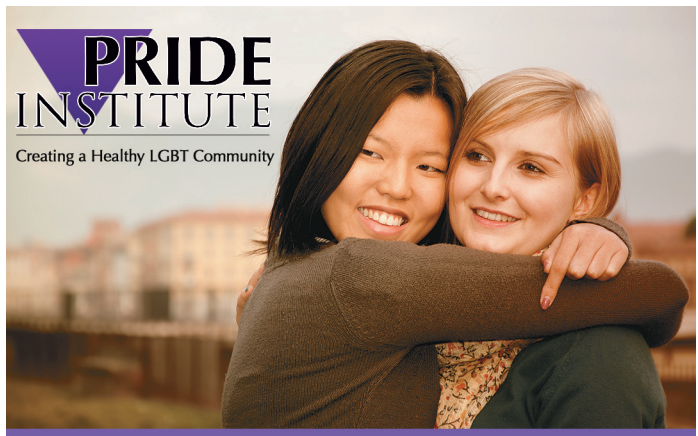
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Laura Andrews (a graduate student) and Melissa Houghtaling (a lawyer) met on OkCupid when the online dating website suggested that they would be a good match. Laura sent the initial casual message remarking on their compatibility, and Melissa responded with an equally short quip about how they would get along because they both liked food and drinks. That line set Laura up with a perfect excuse to suggest a meeting. When their schedules aligned several weeks later, the women penciled in a dinner date for a Wednesday in August 2011. On the day of their first date, Melissa was running late because she had to “drive from downtown St. Paul to Uptown during rush hour—without air conditioning in my car—and I met every red stoplight on Lyndale!” When Melissa finally appeared (frazzled, sweaty, and worried that Laura gave up on her late date), she found Laura outside on the phone, arranging a back-up date just in case Melissa blew her off.

What could have been a complete disaster was met with humor and understanding. Laura responded to Melissa’s apology with a bit of light-hearted sass, and the two sat down to dinner. Melissa found Laura’s sassy attitude “infectious,” and suggested they continue their date with drinks on the rooftop patio of Moto-i. As the date continued to improve, the two finally exchanged phone numbers, and Laura invited herself to a Fringe play with Melissa and her brother. After that night, the stage was set for Melissa and Laura to share their lives together.

After a year and a half of dating, Laura decided they should take the next step. Valentine’s Day 2013 was met with the usual romance (planned by Melissa), but Friday, February 15 was destined to be even more memorable. While Melissa was out to lunch with a friend, Laura snuck into Melissa’s office to prepare her surprise. Melissa returned to find a small ring dish on her desk with the inscription, “Grow old with me; the best is yet to come.” Placed delicately in the center of the dish was a beautiful diamond ring. Melissa peeked her head out of her empty office to ask her co-workers what was going on, and Laura came around the corner, “rose in hand and high heels on feet.” Melissa was surprised to see her girlfriend in her St. Paul office “in the middle of a work day AND in high heels,” and asked what was going on. Laura responded casually, “Oh, I just stopped by to see if you wanted to marry me.” Melissa’s answer was an absolute yes, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30 ➔





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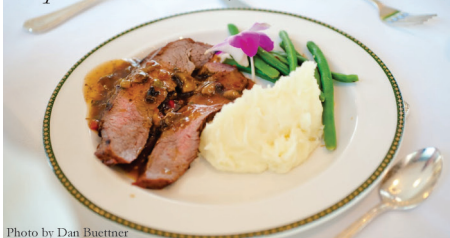


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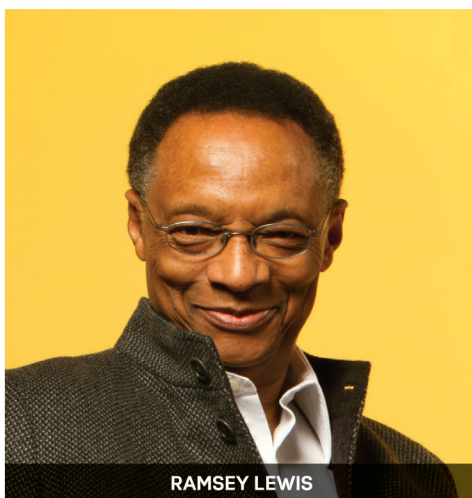
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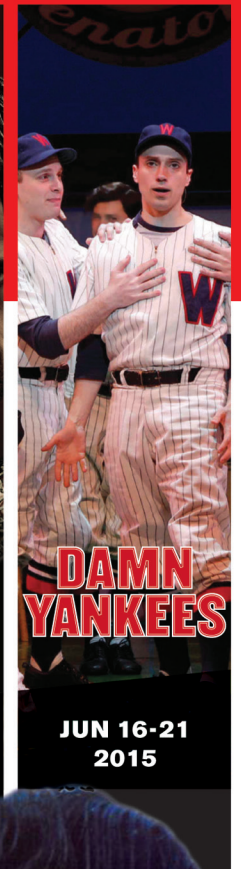
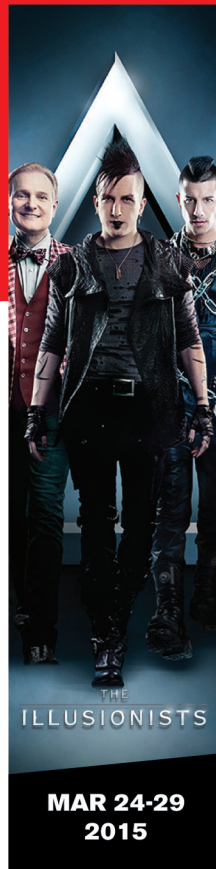
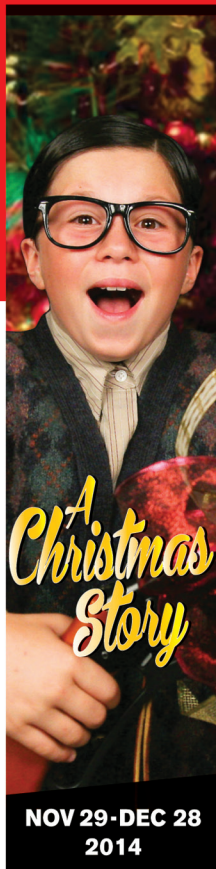
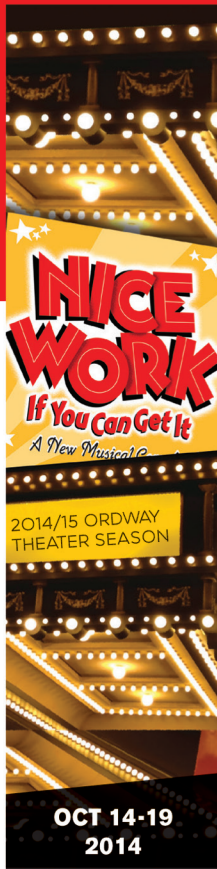
{ WEDDING STORY }





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## { WEDDING STORY }

the two returned to their work after a wine toast and excited phone calls to friends

The women set their wedding date for September 13, 2013 and began their planning. With about seven months to plan their big day, the two decided to do most of the planning themselves and opt for contracting a day-of coordinator to ensure everything ran smoothly on their wedding day. Once they decided that the Minikahda Country Club would be their venue, Melissa and Laura utilized Minikahda's preferred vendor list and weddingwire.com to choose their vendors. Melissa notes, "Many of our decisions were based on two factors. Were the vendors reasonably priced to fit with our budget? And, were the vendors comfortable with a same-sex wedding?" The couple specifically stated to potential vendors that their wedding was a same-sex wedding. Melissa adds, "We didn't want vendors who were not comfortable with us or with our guests to be involved in our special day."

Finding vendors who are accepting and welcoming to same-sex clients can be a nerve-racking experience because marriage equality is still new in Minnesota. Because wedding vendors are trusted with providing services on such a monumental occasion, it's important to determine if a potential vendor is going to be comfortable working with GLBT couples. GLBT Minnesotans, however, are fortunate enough to have access to an overwhelmingly welcoming wedding industry. Melissa and Laura found this to be particularly true during their planning process: "Almost everyone we spoke to was not only comfortable with a same-sex wedding, but excited to work with us!"

Once their vendors were chosen, Melissa and Laura developed the aesthetic of their wedding based on their personal styles. Though the women define their collective style as "classic with a twist," they note that Melissa's style is a bit more contemporary while Laura's style tends to be more whimsical. Driven by her love for design, Melissa found inspiration in magazine and online sources, and they worked together to refine those ideas into a cohesive style. They chose to use a red, black, and white color palette to keep their design clean and classic. "It was really important to us that our ceremony and reception was both romantic and fun. We wanted our guests to feel the love we share with each other and show them how much we love and appreciate their support."

In order to celebrate their love for each other, their friends, and their families, the women planned to incorporate many personal details into their ceremony and reception. One of Melissa's friends built the arbor used in the ceremony, another friend stepped in as the officiant, and more friends provided the music for the ceremony. During the ceremony, the couple placed love letters into a custom-made, wooden wine box, which they plan to open on their first anniversary. The couple chose to honor Melissa's brother by skipping the party favors and donating to the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund in his memory. Even their dog Elliott was included in the celebration; they used photographs of Elliott as table markers at the reception.

Though they were celebrating the beginning of their life together, it was important for both women to be honored as individuals. Each woman wrote her own vows, and they both took turns walking down

the aisle. Melissa and Laura also wanted to highlight their own personal styles, and this was accomplished particularly well through their unique wardrobes. The women shopped separately for their wedding gowns, which allowed them to both find their perfect dresses. Melissa found her dream dress at Brides of France, while Laura purchased her dress from Rush's Bridal. They then planned a costume change during the reception to show off their more casual, fun side. Melissa spent the rest of the evening in a red Banana Republic suit, and Laura wore a white party dress from Flutter Boutique. Both women danced the night away in custom Converse All-Star high tops which were embroidered with their wedding date.

Perhaps the most unique detail of their wedding was their getaway car: a bright orange, 1976 VW Beetle convertible, owned by the couple. Driven by Melissa's desire to own a vintage beetle convertible, Laura hunted one down in 2012 and purchased it from the original owners. They add, "We love the car because it always makes people smile as we pass them, and it's fun to watch kids 'slug' their friends as we drive by in our 'slug bug!'"

By incorporating personal details into their classic wedding, Melissa and Laura were able to create a fun and romantic ceremony that honored their journey as a couple and as individuals. As they grow together in years to come, the tiny details of their special day may fade from memory, but their love and commitment to each other will continue to get stronger. Melissa expresses, "I count myself as the luckiest girl in the world for finding such an amazing partner in life. She makes me impossibly happy." ■

### Spring Wedding: Melissa and Laura Houghtaling

**Date of Ceremony/Reception:** September 13, 2013

**Number of Guests:** 176

**Location of Ceremony:** Minikahda Country Club upper deck (outside)

**Location of Reception:** Minikahda Country Club Ballroom

**Florist:** Wisteria

**Rings:** Brilliant Earth

**Accessories:** Shoes: Ralph Lauren, Converse

**Bridesmaid Dresses:** Alfred Sung dresses from The Wedding Shoppe

**Bridal Gowns:** La Sposa dress from Brides of France (Melissa), Allure Brides dress from Rush's Bridal (Laura)

**Day-of Coordinator:** Bliss

**Invitations/Stationary:** Weddingpaperdivas.com (invitations), Zazzle.com (programs, table numbers, menus)

**Linens/Tableware:** Provided by Minikahda

**Decorations:** Made by Melissa and friends

**Main Photographer:** Natalie Finazzo Fox from Rivets & Roses

**Second Photographer:** Leslie Plesser from Rivets & Roses

**Cake:** Angel Food Bakery

**Cake Topper:** Etsy purchase from MissSarahCakes



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Celebrating

## { WEDDING STORY }

by Shane Lueck  
Photography by  
a.m. photography

# A WEDDING LONG OVERDUE

For a couple that had been together for over 25 years, marriage seems like a logical step. However, in the case of Stephan Courtright and Michael Short, marriage was not legal – it seemed unfeasible. But with Minnesota's legalization of gay marriage, what was once impossible became attainable.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38 ➔



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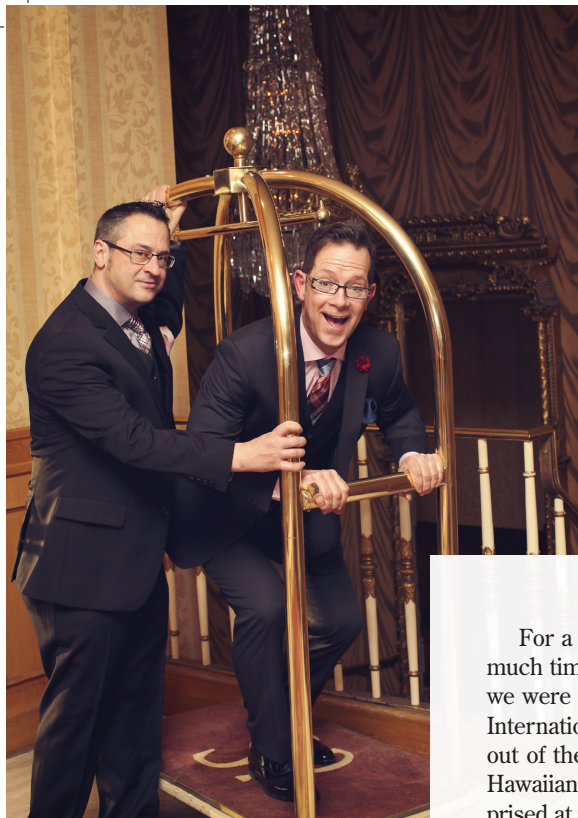
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For a couple that now had marriage options, Michael didn't waste much time. Stephan says, "I never thought we would get married but we were at the State Fair and I had just gotten Michael a beer at the International Bazaar. We were walking across the street and Michael, out of the blue, asked, 'Where do you think we could get married in Hawaiian shirts, shorts, and barefoot, standing in sand?'" Stephan, surprised at the question, began naming Mexico, Hawaii, and other warm places without legal gay marriage. "Michael laughed and said, 'No I mean here in Minnesota...' So I started laughing and said that you can't get married in Minnesota in February in shorts Hawaiian shirts and barefoot! We would lose our 'Gay Card.' Then, I went to work to change his mind on the clothing."

Michael's account of the proposal is a bit more loaded with mixed feelings. "We have been together for over twenty-five years and I'd never thought I'd have an opportunity to get married," he says. "So when the law changed it took me a while to wrap my mind around marriage. As a child of divorced parents, I had lots to think about. Those feelings and issues had nothing to do with my love for Stephan or our relationship. I just needed some time to work through them."

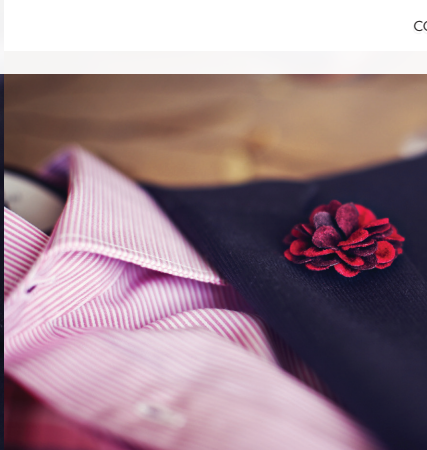
Michael says the proposal was somewhat spontaneous and, although he regrets not making it more special and romantic, Michael's main focus on getting married was that it occur on their anniversary. He adds, "Just because the law changed, it doesn't negate our relationship and the years we've spent together."

It is said that everyone has a story to tell. But the tale behind how Stephan Courtright and Michael Short met is one that deserved special attention on the back of their wedding program (and even inspired the signature drink at the reception!).

No one would guess that love can blossom at a 7-Eleven, but the store located at Lyndale Avenue and 32<sup>nd</sup> Street served as the backdrop for this budding relationship. In the wee hours of Valentine's Day 26 years ago, Michael craved one of his favorite vices: Häagen Dazs Vanilla Swiss Almond ice cream. Much to Michael's delight, there was one carton remaining. As he opened the freezer door, an arm (that didn't belong to him) reached in for the exact container he was so desperately seeking.

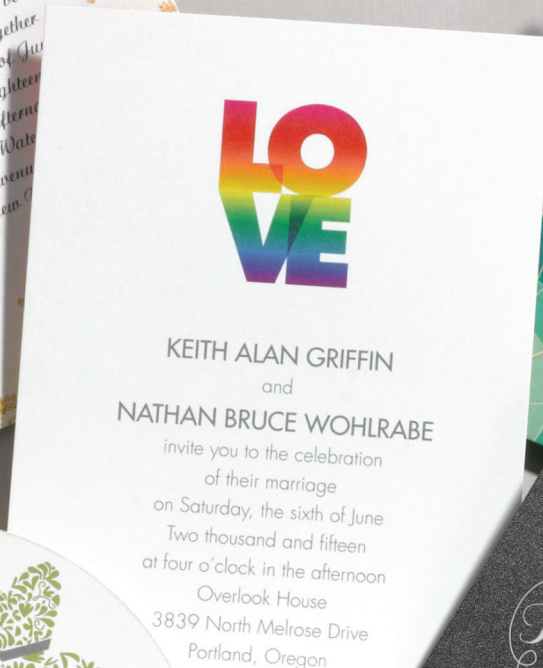


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{ WEDDING STORY }





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## { WEDDING STORY }

Michael turned to see Stephan, who, Michael notes, could have been in extreme danger. Standing between Michael and his Häagen Dazs has the potential to result in a lost limb due to an unfortunate freezer door malfunction. Luckily, Michael was struck by Stephan's presence and didn't resort to violence. Instead, he relied on the old verbal standby of "I saw it first" to which Stephan countered: "Possession is nine-tenths of the law." Touché, Stephan, touché.

The sales clerk refused to act as judge on the dispute, resulting in the compromise of resorting to Stephan's nearby apartment and sharing. Fast-forward to the summer of 2013, and suddenly the two men are faced with a wedding to plan.

Settling on a venue and vendors for a wedding can be an overwhelming experience. Stephan, who works as a hairstylist at Wave Salon, has received a wealth of information from clients over the years. As an advocate of supporting people and business that are friends, Stephan relied on family and friends whenever possible.

Michael took a different approach. "We knew the date, just not the year. We started talking about how cool it would be to get married on 2/14/2014 but we had no idea about locations," he adds. "In my mind, many of our vendor decisions would depend upon the venue."

With a seemingly impossible dream of being married in a matter of months, the couple had settled on the idea of waiting until 2015 as finding a venue with such short notice was unlikely. Stephan shared this with a client and dear friend sitting in his chair, Lizzie, as they were discussing his engagement. When he went to the back of the salon to mix her hair color, Lizzie began texting. "When I came back Lizzie said, 'Why not have your wedding at our house? We do not have any plans for Valentine's Day. It will give us something to do and it will be our honor.'" Having caught him off guard, Stephan politely declined.

Discussing this gesture with Michael later, Michael agreed that declining was best. "I thought it was a gracious offer and said we should politely decline," he says. "I felt uncomfortable with the idea of having our wedding in a friend's home; such a thing can truly test the best of any friendships, and on top of that was the fact that Lizzie is a client of Stephan's." Michael sent Lizzie an email thanking her for the offer, but also declined, and the two thought this would be the end of it.

About ten days later, the couple received a beautiful, hand-made invitation in the mail. "It was an invitation to our wedding, from Lizzie, her husband Chuck, and their daughter Pia," says Michael, who burst into tears as he read it. Unable to say no to such an offer, Michael and Stephan agreed to host it at Lizzie's beautiful Tudor-style home. "We turned their world upside down, cleared out all their furniture and took over, and we never once had a conflict or problem. They were truly gracious hosts. If not for them I think we would still would be trying to figure out how to get married."

With the venue issue settled, the two began melding two styles into a coherent look. "When it comes to style I usually defer to Stephan, it's his business and he's very good at it," Michael says. "My original ideas about a casual barefoot wedding quickly morphed into something more stylish. Especially after Stephan explained that a loud, Hawaiian-print silk shirt does not translate into a slimming

look." While the couple gravitated to elements of personal strengths, they always worked together. Discussing everything as a couple, they also talked to friends and family seeking advice.

While a coherent look and stylish feel was important, Stephan believed the two should have styles that play off one another yet remain unique. Notably, Stephan found fabric boutonnieres in a magazine and had to have them, ordering two different colors to prevent dressing identically.

Personal touches were added to the big day as well. Stephan says, "It was also very important to me to wear my father's ring that my mother gave to him when they first started dating, he passed away awhile ago and I wanted a piece of him there."

For Michael, this personal aspect came in the form of a family heirloom pocket watch, which required he wear a suit with a vest. "It may sound funny but it gave me great joy to have that element in our wedding. Something I could not have done wearing a Hawaiian shirt," he adds. "I must also admit that I didn't totally understand the funky socks, but they made for some fun photos and now I get it. Stephan saw the big picture in advance and that's one of the many reasons I love him."

That love has gotten the couple through nearly three decades together. After such a commitment to one another, Stephan and Michael found gifts to be unnecessary and encouraged guests to donate to charity (Stephan's suggestion was Randy Shaver's Cancer Fund while Michael's charity of choice was the The Aliveness Project).

"Our wedding was not a celebration of the start of a life together," Stephan adds. "It was a celebration of a long, loving relationship blending with the evolution of an increasingly enlightened society." ■

### Spring Wedding: Stephan Courtright and Michael Short

**Date of Ceremony/Reception:** February 14, 2014

**Number of Guests:** 80

**Location of Ceremony/Reception:** Friend Lizzie's home in Highland Park

**Florist:** Bachman's

**Boutonnieres:** Hook & Albert

**Rings:** Scheherazade Jewelers (The couple didn't purchase new rings, but had old ones cleaned and reconditioned)

**Accessories:** Michael: Clarks shoes, Calvin Klein shirt, Esquire tie, Happy Sox socks; Stephan: Prada shoes, Esquire shirt, Esquire tie, Steven Land socks

**Suits:** Men's Warehouse

**Day-of Coordinator:** Wendy Short-Hays, Michael's aunt

**Invitations/Stationary:** Designed in collaboration with a.m. photography

**Guest and Photo Book:** Rag and Bone

**Linens/Tableware:** Après Party and Tent Rental

**Caterer:** Abraham Catering

**Photographer:** a.m. photography

**Cake:** Pastries by Amy Kovacs

**Music:** Jimmy Martin

**Officiant:** Elliot Hays, Michael's uncle



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With construction beginning in July 2013 and wrapping up in late November, the vision for Minneapolis Event Center (MEC) at Saint Anthony Main was born from an event planner's perspective, and not a corporate perspective. "We wanted a gorgeous space that first and foremost functions properly," says Michael Basler, the Marketing and Design Manager for MEC. "We wanted jaw-dropping beauty when guests first arrive, and comfort throughout the event experience." This atmosphere Basler alludes to may best be described as upscale chic meets historic charm.

Basler says same-sex couples will love the attention to detail infused into the space. Outdoors, MEC offers a romantic, lush, private-walled garden space for outdoor ceremonies, complete with brick and slate patios, modern sculpture, a gas fire pit, patio heaters, and a wide variety of perennials and annuals. Inside, guests will find a light-filled atrium with fourteen-foot ceilings and floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the garden. The ballroom features African hardwood dance floors, historic exposed brick walls and wood beams, LED lighting, LCD flat-screen TVs, and spa-inspired bathrooms complete with real cloth hand towels. To sweeten the deal, MEC offers convenient off-street parking for 1400 cars across the street (with discounted valet service also available).

What differentiates MEC from many other venues is the ability to offer a turnkey event (read: no hidden fees). "We include all staffing needs, coat check, servers, and event personnel," Basler says. "Tables with linens and mahogany Chiavari chairs are also included at no additional cost. Our full-service, in-house catering offers unique dining experiences for every mood and budget. All china, glassware, flatware, linen, and candles are included with the space fee. We also have a killer in-house sound system and advanced audio visual capabilities."

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Steven Schussler, well-known as the creator of the Rainforest Café Restaurants, fell in love with the original architectural, character & charm of the historic barn. He bought it to save it from being torn down and, almost immediately, Schussler was inundated with requests to rent the barn for various events. Because he loves to share his creations with others, he took the idea of becoming an event center (which came from the community) and decided to go for it! After almost three years of renovations and approvals from nineteen government agencies, the vision to restore and preserve as much as possible of the historic barn's authentic character, charm, and structure was completed. Green Acres opened March 1, 2013, as the first and only event center in the city of Eden Prairie.

Using original materials when and where available, the barn's quaint beauty is now complemented with the modern conveniences of heat, air conditioning, new up-to-date bathrooms, an elevator, and sound system. The barn's décor appeals to the five senses with crystal and candlelight chandeliers, a collection of antique jukeboxes, an extravagant Italian water fountain, old fashioned player pianos, music, color and theatrical lighting. Cozy seating areas around warm fireplaces with weathered horse saddles, antique kerosene lanterns, aged furniture, and artwork makes guests feel comfortable and transports them back to those bygone days.

Although valet parking service is required at an additional expense (due to limited parking) and there is less flexibility in terms of catering (due to an in-house caterer), the experience truly is customizable. "The only limit at Green Acres is your imagination," says Sunhi Ryan, the Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Schussler Creative, Inc. "There are so many options for creating the event of your dreams." Couples are able to bring in any sort of décor, photos, and belongings that speak to their personal style and the feel they want for their wedding. Ryan shares the story of one same-sex couple who wanted to both feel like brides and not have one assuming the role of groom and the other as bride as they walk down the aisle. With two staircases leading to the upper level loft, they loved the idea of each of them using a stair case where both would enter at the same time. ■

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## QUORUM SECTION

ADVERTORIAL

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### WHAT IS TWIN CITIES QUORUM?

- Quorum is the Twin Cities GLBT & Allied Chamber of Commerce.
- Quorum champions the business case for a fully inclusive community as a conduit for economic development and a leader in the continuum of change.
- Quorum is an affiliate of the NGLCC (National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce) in D.C. Through the NGLCC, Quorum helps local small businesses to obtain their LGBTQ certification.
- Quorum partners with corporate members to plan and host quarterly workplace alliance events with the local corporate LGBTQ ERGs (Employee Resource Groups).

### QUORUM'S 2014 COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARDS – MAY 15th, 2014

The Quorum Community Leadership Awards is a very special night for the GLBT and Allied Community, and this year it will be hosted by our former Executive Director – **Sam McClure**. Quorum will recognize and honor five exceptional people or organizations, nominated by their community and chosen by the Leadership Awards Selection Committee. You will have a very rare opportunity to hear their stories and to find out what inspires and motivates them. Every year our guests tell us that this is one of the most powerful and uplifting events of the year.

Nominations are open until March 28th, and the form can be found on [www.twincitiesquorum.com](http://www.twincitiesquorum.com). Submit as many nominations as you would like. Nominations are open to both Quorum members and non-Quorum members.

### THE CATEGORIES & CRITERIA ARE AS FOLLOWS:

#### QUORUM BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

- Demonstrates excellence and success in business or profession
- Visibly support the GLBTA community by providing contributions and/or in kind services and other support to nonprofit organizations, political issues, or other community-wide causes

#### QUORUM NONPROFIT OF THE YEAR

- Is a nonprofit organization with 501(c) 3 status
- Openly support issues and/or provide services that benefit and enhance the health, spirit, pride and diversity of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals and our community

CONTINUED ON PAGE 50 →

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**QUORUM BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR**

- Demonstrates excellent and success in business or profession
- Demonstrates leadership in the community through volunteer activities and/or serving as a positive role model for others

**QUORUM INCLUSION LEADER OF THE YEAR**

- Demonstrates leadership that creates an environment that embraces the inclusion of all voices and perspectives
- Demonstrates a commitment to creating a fully inclusive organizational culture
- Openly supports issues that affect the spirit, pride and diversity of gay, lesbians, bisexual, and transgender people in the workplace
- The recipient of this award may be an individual or an organization

**QUORUM LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

Demonstrates significant leadership benefiting the GLBTA community within the span and the individual's personal and/or professional life.

**NGLCC Road Show May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

After hosting the 2014 Twin Cities Quorum Community Leadership Awards, Sam McClure will be hosting the NGLCC Road Show to talk about local businesses about becoming LGBTEs (certified LGBT Business Enterprises). Plan on attending this informative session to help grow your business.

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## FLEXIBILITY IN A VENUE: MUSE EVENT CENTER

Completed in early September 2013, Muse Event Center is a space to fit everyone's needs. An incredibly large venue (it can host events of 1,300 guests if needed), Muse has an open floor plan that can keep everyone together and multiple levels that can offer further dimension to the ceremony. Add in the much-desired location of the North Loop and it seems too good to be true.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 54 ➔







Photos: Noah Wolf



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## { VENUES }

But the property has a bit of a checkered past. In recent history, the space housed the Trocadero nightclub (from 2005 to 2009) and was riddled with noise complaints. After the club closed, the space sat empty for years receiving attention from potential buyers without anything panning out. That is, until the creative minds behind Muse grabbed a hold of it. Last year, Twin Cities-based restaurateur Kam Talebi confirmed that he and his partners at Kaskaid Hospitality had reached an agreement to purchase the property. Kaskaid, the \$60 million parent company to Crave, Figlio, Urban Eatery, and Union restaurants, converted the 23,000-square-foot space into the Muse Event Center.

"The vision for the redesign was to create a blank canvas that would allow each and every client to be able to transform the space into their own unique event," says Zach Sussman, the Marketing Director. "The design is simple yet elegant allowing for clients to put their own spin on the place."

Muse offers distinct areas for guests to enjoy. The open floor plan on the first two levels allows couples to utilize the spaces together for a larger group or the rooms can be separated for a ceremony in one space and reception in the other. The third floor offers a private club room that is perfect for a smaller group to gather. There is also a bridal suite that offers a beautiful space to get ready for the big day.

"We don't really differentiate between same-sex couples and everyone else—the venue is perfect for every wedding!" says Sussman. "The elegant dressing rooms with multiple bathrooms and showers, storage lockers, and vanities are definitely a hit with wedding parties. The third floor lounge is also a fun unique feature that allows guests to enjoy different event spaces and experiences within

the same venue."

According to Sussman, flexibility is something Muse offers that no other venue in town can match. The space can be utilized by groups of all sizes and can be made to feel intimate for a small group of 30 to 50 guests, or the entire space can be utilized for a giant wedding of 1000+ guests. Sectional staging allows for a variety of performances including aerialists, bands, theater productions, or the ceremony itself. Still not intrigued? Sound, lighting, and other technology enhancements are also top tier, and an in-house tech team can (and will!) handle all of the details for a hassle-free experience for the wedding party.

In a space that is available for receptions, ceremonies, rehearsal dinners, and anything else the wedding party can think of, the options seem endless. But what about all the small details that often muddle the planning process? "When you rent the space, the tables, chivari chairs, linens, and dressing room are all included in the cost, along with the personalized service of our catering sales team and culinary experts," Sussman says.

However, there are no quick answers in terms of pricing. "Our pricing structure is unique to each event, as we've found there is no "one size fits all" formula for events, especially weddings," Sussman says. "We work with every single guest to stay within their budget while exceeding their expectations." This pricing model and flexibility is one of the most common accolades Muse has received from wedding couples, and another thing not found anywhere else in town. Sussman adds, "In a traditional industry dominated by a very few players, we've seen a lot of success in giving people what they want at a price they can afford." ■

**A diversity in spaces allows for different events and experiences to be found in the same venue.** Photos courtesy of Muse Event Center







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# HOW TO DRESS UP YOUR WEDDING, WINE-STYLE



Woo-hoo! You're getting married! Of course you want every detail to be exactly right ...and there are so many details! Aside from what to wear, perhaps the most important decisions you make are going to be about food and drink. Unless you are blessed with an extensive knowledge of food and wine and how they go together, you will be doing a lot of homework.

So, how do you pick a wine? Obviously the chief criteria is that it must taste good. It also has to complement your menu selections without breaking the bank. And, dare I say, you probably want it to make a statement about you and your beloved. A fun statement! A statement that proclaims "We know who we are and we know how to make a good party great by choosing all the right components." Selecting great wine is key to providing your guests with a truly memorable experience.

Meet Little Black Dress Wines. This line of fun, inexpensive wines has something for every wine lover. Most people want to offer a choice of red and white at their weddings. Little Black Dress has you more than covered there. With a full complement of varietals from classic Chardon-

nay and Cabernet, to Moscato and Riesling, Little Black Dress has a wine that will work with any dish. Planning to serve Italian food? Bring on the Pinot Grigio! Maybe you and your partner absolutely love ethnic foods, like Indian or Thai? You could serve either a Riesling or Sauvignon Blanc. Each wine has a personality and flavor profile that enables you to make the perfect pairing for your perfect event.

Little Black Dress Wines are the result of the art and craft of Zidanelia Arcidiacono, familiarly known as Z, ('cos who can say *that* name three times fast?). A US native who grew up in Argentina, Z studied wine-making in Mendoza, completing her education with a degree from the National School of Oenology before moving on to France to complete her wine studies. Crisscrossing the globe, Z became harvest oenologist in California for the likes of Sonoma Cutrer. From there, she was recruited by Little Black Dress to come up with their signature collection. Now one of the most popular and affordable brands on the market, Little Black Dress Wines are synonymous with style, and like the little black dress they



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## { WINE }

are named for, these wines can be counted on to make you look good!

In addition to the traditional varietals, Z has created three Divalicious blends. These wines offer a more complex flavor profile with enhanced flexibility. Divalicious Red is an alluring blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Carignan, and Petite Sirah, along with hints of Zinfandel, Tannat, Mourvèdre, Garnacha, and Malbec. Chances are some of these names may not mean that much to you, but they add up to a rich, juicy, red with notes of ripe berries, black cherries, and floral accents. It flirts well with spicy food, and with hearty meat dishes. Or you can dress it up for a red-wine-based cocktail or a summery sangria.

Depending on your menu, you may prefer something lighter and zestier, such as Divalicious White, a delectable blend of Pinot Grigio, Moscato, Chardonnay, and Sauvignon Blanc. This wine is great with food, or just as an aperitif ...a truly versatile selection likely to please even the biggest wine snob at the wedding!

Right now, there is a tremendous surge in popularity for blush wines (aka *Rosé*). Here Z has worked her magic too, developing a brand new Pink Pinot Grigio that stands out in a crowded field. What makes Divalicious Pink Pinot Grigio so divalicious? The subtle blend of grapes: Pinot Grigio, Muscat, Chardonnay, and Viognier. Crisp, refreshing, and a ravishing shade of pale pink (derived from the naturally copper-hued skins of the Pinot Grigio grape), Divalicious Pink Pinot Grigio not only works well with a variety of foods but it is perfect for the cocktail hour. The bottles look gorgeous on a wedding table, or you can make it a signature gift for guests, the

bridal party, and groomsmen.

Not least, Little Black Dress Wines have a social commitment element as well. The winery supports various charities, either directly or through partnerships. Causes we all care about, such as breast cancer awareness and supporting female veterans. Buying these wines means buying into a community of like-minded people whose purchases reflect their values. So not only do you identify yourself as stylish, sexy, and savvy, but you express your social conscience in your choices.

After all, a wedding is not just about celebration is it? It is a public demonstration of commitment; a contract with one another and with society as a whole. It's an exciting opportunity to show who you are and what you care about. Hooray! ■

Katy Keiffer is a contributing editor for *Food Arts*, writing primarily about the meat and seafood industries. She also hosts a weekly show devoted to the food industry for Heritage Radio Network. With her teenage daughter Delilah, Katy divides her time between homes in New York City and Rhode Island, where she loves to entertain and maintains an impressive wine cellar.



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# CATERING

## TO YOU

Mexican Grilled Cheese. Photo by Matt Lien Photography

When it comes to wedding food, a lot of guests have pretty low expectations. That's because we've all had our fill of ho-hum chicken dinners with potatoes and green beans. (I don't care if you add sliced almonds.) The good news is that today's couples are raising the culinary bar and putting their focus (and money) on wedding fare. With everything from sangria-inspired gelées and food truck favorites to mac and cheese bars and s'mores stations, the options are endless. And keep in mind: the Twin Cities top talents are always trying to outdo themselves.

One of the newest catering companies on the scene comes from the creators of the critically acclaimed and award-winning Saffron Restaurant in the North Loop. Brothers Saed and Chef Sameh Wadi, who are also behind the World Street Kitchen food truck and WSK restaurant, are celebrated for bringing street style food from around the globe to Minneapolis. Adding to an already impressive resume, Sameh was the first Minnesotan to compete on *Iron Chef America* a few years back.

"I thought it was a prank when my brother called to tell me about *Iron Chef*. I was like a kid in candy store because I was always such a fan of the show," says Sameh.

He didn't win the title, but his passion for cooking helped launch his latest endeavor: W&W Catering. The dream team of sorts also includes big brother Saed, who lends his considerable charms as host, and hailed local event and design planner, Geri Wolf, who brings her own unique philosophy to the table.

"It (catering) is really the marriage of food design and service. Food should be part of the entertainment and décor. With W&W we asked ourselves, 'What can we offer that isn't already being offered around here?'" Wolf says.

To compete in the dynamic and crowded food arena, W&W dazzles with countless signature dishes that are about as far from chicken and green bean almonidine as possible. Menus range from burritos all the way up to a stewed salmon with tomatoes and black olives. Everything is made from scratch. The company offers full service catering, boxed meals, and drop-off service, as well as the World Street Kitchen food truck.

"Based on talking with several of our gay couples who have been clients, the quality of food is really important and they love the design element. Our ability to customize is also a big part of the conversation for gay weddings," Wolf adds.



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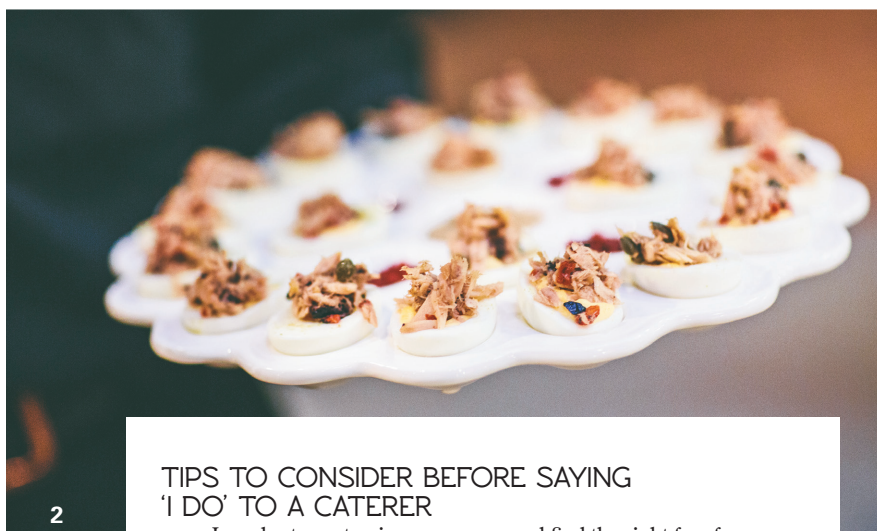
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## { CATERING }



1



2

### TIPS TO CONSIDER BEFORE SAYING 'I DO' TO A CATERER

- In order to customize your menu and find the right fare for your wedding or rehearsal dinner, it's important to ask a lot of questions and establish a budget. Geri Wolf serves up some helpful tips:
- Share your budget range and discuss your priorities. What tops the list? Is it the style of service, quality of food, or presentation?
- When comparing catering companies, check to see what is included in each estimate. Are servers and bartenders provided? What about China, flatware, and glassware?
- Ask your caterer to visit your venue beforehand to determine any potential challenges.
- Share décor ideas so it will be a cohesive wedding experience.
- To save money, consider setting up an hors d'oeuvres buffet rather than butler passing. It lowers labor costs and embellishment platters offer a lot of bang for your buck.
- Always have a plan "B" for outdoor weddings. If you don't, it's guaranteed to rain buckets.
- What's Saed's advice to people when they hire a caterer? "You know, they have to believe in the people they hire; can they do the job that needs to be done? It's not really about the price or how good looking we are, it's actually about what can we do for them from the first meeting to the reception." ■

For more information: [www.wandwcatering.com](http://www.wandwcatering.com)



3



4

1. W&W Catering and Events Coastal Station; 2. Nicoise Deviled Eggs; 3. Into the Garden Station; 4. YumYum Rice Bowl Station. Photos by Matt Lien Photography



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Celebrating

## { DESTINATION WEDDING }

by Morgan Ross

# PUERTO VALLARTA

Destination weddings are a hassle. Planning from afar, travel expenses, shuffling a guest list, the headaches go on and on. But saying “I do” with the sun setting over the ocean and the feeling of sand between your toes as you kiss your partner makes all of the fuss worth it.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 66 →





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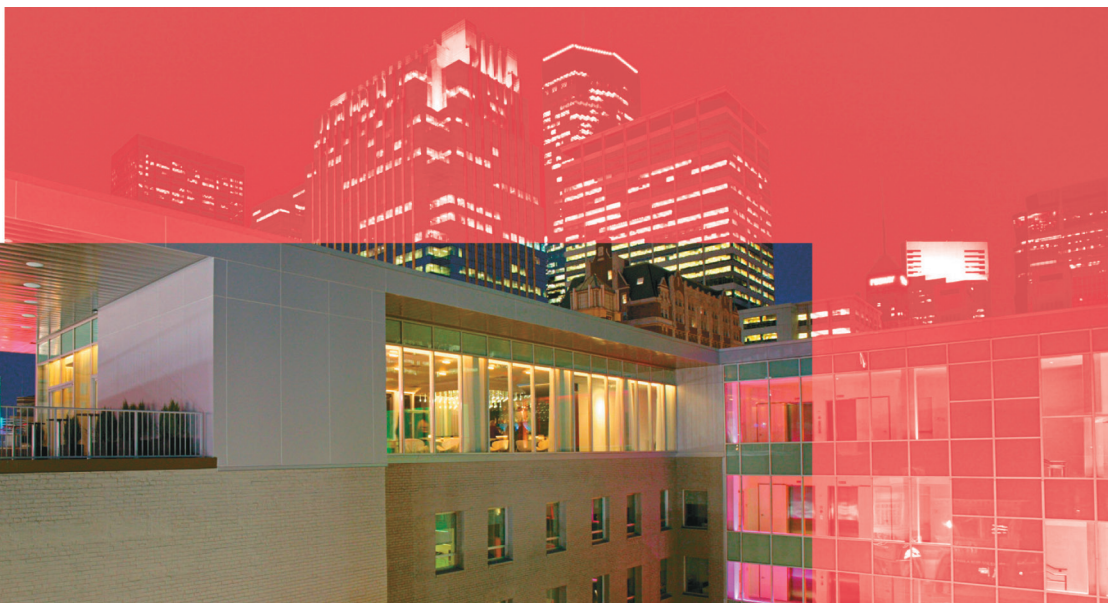


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## { DESTINATION WEDDING }

### GETTING THERE

I thought that using a travel agent was for two kinds of people; rich people who don't have the time to plan for themselves and people who don't know how to use the Internet. After calling Tracy SanNicolas at Riverdale Travel, I knew I was wrong.

My partner and I wanted a relaxing, warm, romantic getaway with an all-inclusive package on a beach. Tracy recommended Puerto Vallarta from personal experience. With the combination of the award winning beaches, the mountains as a backdrop, and the friendliness of the city, it has the perfect ingredients for romance overload.

### MAKING THE PLANS

Puerto Vallarta is the ultimate destination for everyone. Whether you are getting married, looking to zip line, swim with dolphins, whale watch, walk on the beach, sip a piña colada in the pool, unwind in the spa, or relax and soak up the sun, Puerto Vallarta offers it all.

An on-site wedding planner is the key person to make your dream wedding a reality. Today, most of them plan the whole wedding via email, from the location of the ceremony all the way down to the color of the table linens.



Hard Rock Hotel. Photo courtesy of Hard Rock Hotel

CONTINUED ON PAGE 68 ➔



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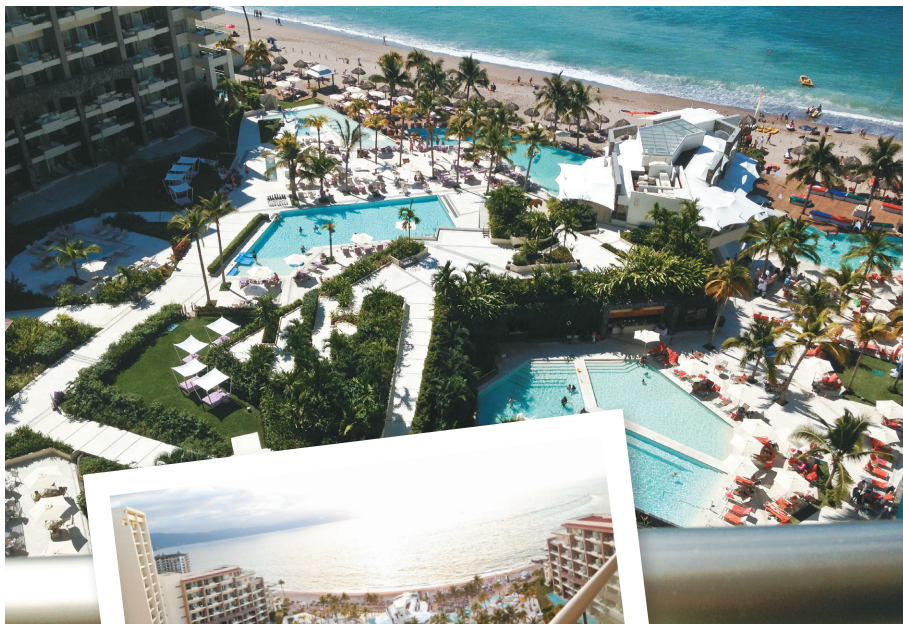
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## { DESTINATION WEDDING }



**Now Amber Puerto Vallarta & Secrets Vallarta Bay.**  
Photos by Danielle Hop

Being voted one of the “Top 10 Destinations in Mexico” on TripAdvisor.com in 2013, Puerto Vallarta has a seemingly endless list of resorts to choose from. I had the opportunity to travel to a few of Riverdale Travel’s favorite resorts to find out more about planning the perfect destination wedding.

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 70 ➔



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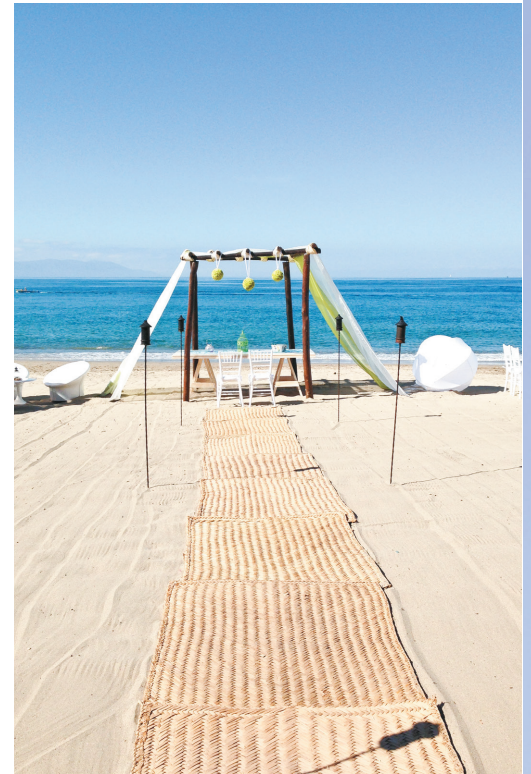
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## { DESTINATION WEDDING }



**Golden Crown.** Photos by Danielle Hop

often stay in the Now family-friendly side until the ceremony and switch over to the Secrets adults only side for the honeymoon. For more information visit [www.nowresorts.com](http://www.nowresorts.com)

### GOLDEN CROWN

The wedding destination for a more authentic feel. Upon arriving at the Golden Crown it immediately had a different vibe than the rest of the resorts. The

CONTINUED ON PAGE 72 ➔



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## { DESTINATION WEDDING }



**Casa Velas.** Photo by Danielle Hop

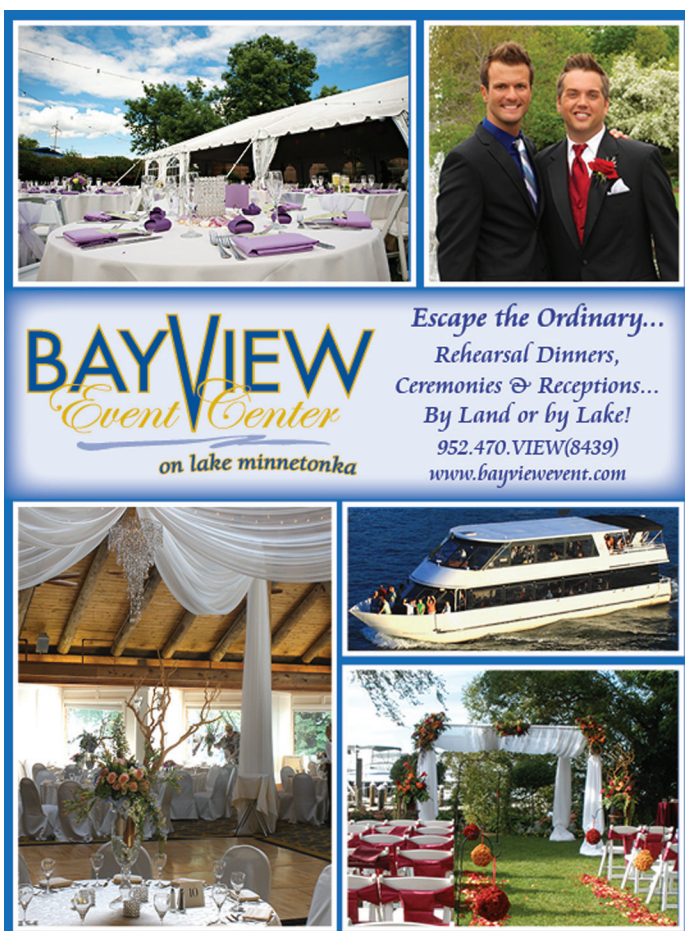
colors, the tile, and the décor allow you to feel the themes of Mexico indoors, unlike any of the other resorts. Golden Crown is partially adults-only and partially family-friendly. All rooms have an ocean view, an all-inclusive package, and freedom to go back and forth between the family-friendly and adult-only sides of the resort. From the rehearsal dinner to the ceremony to the farewell brunch, the Golden Crown has the space and the team to help out with all of the necessary details. There are many options and perks in the wedding packages at Golden Crown, pulling in discounted rooms for guests, honeymoon upgrades, and extended stay package rates. For more information visit [www.crownparadise.com](http://www.crownparadise.com)

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 74 ➔





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## DESTINATION WEDDING



Hard Rock Hotel's Beach. Photo courtesy of Hard Rock Hotel

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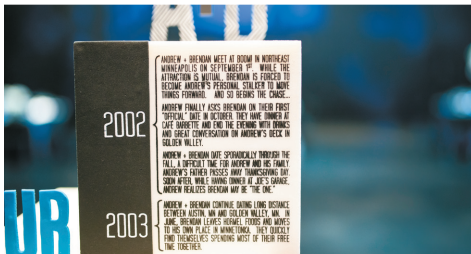


# { REAL WEDDINGS }



## ANDREW SHIMEK & BRENDAN STEVENSON

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**Dating Since:** 2002  
**Location of Ceremony:** Pohlad Lobby, Guthrie Theater  
**Location of Reception:** Dowling Studio, Guthrie Theater  
**Florist:** Mani Mela  
**Cake:** Gateaux, Inc.  
**Invitations:** Beau Papier by Gateaux, Inc.  
**Photography:** Pixel Posey





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## THERESA UPCHURCH & CAROLINE DEMERS

**Wedding Date:** November 10, 2013

**Dating Since:** June 13, 2012

**Location of Ceremony:** Burlington Art Centre in the Garden, Burlington, Ontario, Canada

**Location of Reception:** Rose Room at The Pepperwood Bistro on Lakeshore Road

**Florist:** Brant Street Florist

**Cake:** Sweet Treats by Laura

**Photography:** Liz & David at 808 Photography





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## FRED ROGERS & LAINE NELSON

**Wedding Date:** September 21, 2013  
**Dating Since:** December, 2005  
**Location of Ceremony & Reception:** Horseshoe Bay  
 Lodge on Leech Lake in Walker, MN  
**Wedding Coordinators:** Fred Rogers and  
 Sue Winans, Minister  
**Florist:** Walker Floral  
**Photography:** Tony Sauer







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## LISA KASINKAS & ALICIA ANDERSON

**Wedding Date:** February 15, 2014  
**Dating Since:** 2004  
**Location of Ceremony & Reception:** Millennium  
Hotel, Minneapolis  
**Florist:** Wisteria  
**Cake:** Buttercream  
**Photography:** JuxtaPhotos®





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**LGBT WEDDING OFFICIANT** - I will  
officiate your wedding honoring your  
style and wishes to create a meaningful  
and memorable ceremony. Text Kris at  
celebratingyourlove.officiant@gmail.com.

**Wedding Music to Remember!** We can  
help you make your wedding a musical  
hit with all your guests. Great vocals,  
lively instruments, classic Americana and  
vintage pop music provide tasteful, dance  
friendly songs that everyone enjoys. PA  
rental, setup included. **Sonic Love Child:**  
**(612) 735-1881.** david@soniclovechild.com.

**WEDDING DANCE PREPARATION** - Learn  
the basics of ballroom social dance while  
creating a unique routine designed for  
you and your partner. Ensure confidence,  
celebrate! Nationally certified instructor.  
Julia - (612) 387-3701, julia@arabesqart.  
com.



**Community Connection brings visibility to local GLBT-friendly non-profit organizations. To reserve your listing in Community Connection, call 612-436-4698 or email [advertising@lavendermagazine.com](mailto:advertising@lavendermagazine.com).**

## ADDITION & TREATMENT

### Hazelden

Providing comprehensive treatment, recovery solutions. Helping people reclaim their lives from the disease of addiction.  
PO Box 11  
15251 Pleasant Valley Rd,  
Center City, MN  
(800) 257-7800  
[www.hazelden.org](http://www.hazelden.org)

### L.I.F.E. Program (St. Josephs Hospital)

Outpatient treatment, mental health services for the LGBT community. Suboxone and methadone clients welcome.  
45 W. 10th St.  
St. Paul, MN 55102  
(651) 326-3645  
[www.healtheast.org](http://www.healtheast.org)

## ADOPTION SERVICES

### Minnesota Adoption Resource Network

Finding families for Minnesota's Waiting Children, providing pre/post-adoption services since 1981.  
1221 Nicollet Mall, Ste. 501  
Minneapolis, MN 55403  
(612) 861-7115  
[www.mnadopt.org](http://www.mnadopt.org)

### Pinehaven Youth and Family Services, Inc.

Foster Care and Adoption Agency serving a rainbow color of families. Training and support provided.  
P.O. Box 667  
Brainerd, MN 56401 (statewide)  
320-630-7340 or 218-821-1480  
[www.pinehaven-mn.org](http://www.pinehaven-mn.org)

## ADVOCACY

### Rainbow Health Initiative

Committed to advancing the health and wellness of LGBTQ communities through research, education and advocacy.  
2021 E. Hennepin Ave., Ste. 220  
Minneapolis, MN 55413  
(612) 206-3180  
[www.rainbowhealth.org](http://www.rainbowhealth.org)

## AIDS/HIV INFO & TREATMENT

### Aliveness Project, The

Community Center for Individuals Living with HIV/AIDS - On-site Meals, Food Shelf and Supportive Services.  
3808 Nicollet Ave. S.  
Minneapolis, MN 55409  
(612) 824-LIFE (5433) [www.aliveness.org](http://www.aliveness.org)

### Minnesota AIDS Project AIDSline

The AIDSline is the statewide referral service to connect with HIV information and resources.  
1400 Park Ave.  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 373-AIDS (metro) or  
(800) 248-AIDS (statewide)  
[mapaidline@mnaidspj.org](mailto:mapaidline@mnaidspj.org)  
[www.mnaidspj.org](http://www.mnaidspj.org)

### Park House

Day Health / Mental Health Treatment Program for Adults Living with HIV/AIDS.  
710 E. 24th Street, Suite 303  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 871-1264  
[www.gallina.com/ahs/anw.nsf/page/park\\_house\\_home](http://www.gallina.com/ahs/anw.nsf/page/park_house_home)

### U of MN Research Studies

Looking for HIV+ and HIV- individuals to participate in research studies.  
420 Delaware Street SE  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 625-7472

## CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAUS

### Meet Minneapolis

Convention & Visitor Association. Free wedding service available!  
250 Marquette Ave. S., Ste. 1300  
Minneapolis, MN 55401  
(888) 676-6757  
[www.minneapolis.org](http://www.minneapolis.org)

### Visit Saint Paul

"I Do Saint Paul" is your key to designing the wedding of your dreams.  
175 W. Kellogg Blvd., Ste. 502  
St. Paul, MN 55102  
(800) 627-6101  
[www.visitsaintpaul.com](http://www.visitsaintpaul.com)

## BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS

### Twin Cities Quorum

Your GLBTQA chamber of commerce working to invigorate, build and partner for a diverse business community.  
(612) 399-6827  
[www.twincitiesquorum.com](http://www.twincitiesquorum.com)

## EDUCATION

### William Mitchell College of Law

Minnesota's largest law school. Mitchell is known for its focus on practical legal education. We call it practical wisdom.  
875 Summit Ave.  
St. Paul, MN 55105  
1-(888)-962-5529  
[www.wmitchell.edu](http://www.wmitchell.edu)

## EVENT CENTERS

### American Swedish Institute, The

Luxurious Turnblad Mansion, sleek Nelson Cultural Center - perfect settings for your next event, big or small.  
2600 Park Ave. S.  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 870-3368  
[www.asimn.org](http://www.asimn.org)

### The Klub Haus Private Club

Weddings & Receptions at a beautiful venue. All extras at no additional cost! Outside catering allowed.  
1079 Rice Street  
Saint Paul, MN. 55117  
651.489.4808  
[klubhaus.net](http://klubhaus.net)

## FITNESS

### YWCA of Minneapolis

Serving men, women and families in an inclusive, welcoming environment. Locations in Downtown, Uptown, Midtown.  
1130 Nicollet Mall  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 215-4118  
[www.ywcamps.org](http://www.ywcamps.org)

## GLBT HOMELESS YOUTH

### GLBT Host Home Program of Avenues for Homeless Youth

Securing host homes for GLBT youth experiencing homelessness. Contact us to host or donate.  
1708 Oak Park Ave. N.  
Minneapolis, MN 55411  
(612) 522-1690  
[www.GLBTHostHome.org](http://www.GLBTHostHome.org)

## HEALTH & WELLNESS

### Family Tree Clinic

LGBTQ Health Matters at Family Tree! Offering respectful, affordable sexual health to meet your needs.  
1619 Dayton Ave.  
St. Paul, MN  
(651) 645-0478  
[www.familytree](http://www.familytree)

### HIM Program / Red Door Services

Hennepin County Public Health Clinic  
525 Portland Ave. S, 4th Floor  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 348-9100  
[www.HIMprogram.org](http://www.HIMprogram.org)  
[facebook.com/HIMProgram](https://facebook.com/HIMProgram)  
[www.capsprogram.org](http://www.capsprogram.org)

## LIBRARY

### Quatrefoil Library

Your GLBT Library with stacks of DVDs, books, and magazines. Check out our online catalogue.  
1220 E. Lake St.  
Minneapolis, MN 55407  
(612) 729-2543  
[www.qlibrary.org](http://www.qlibrary.org)

## MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

### MPR & The Current

Providing in depth news coverage, classical music, and emerging artists on our three regional services.  
480 Cedar St.  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
(651) 290-1500  
[www.mpr.org](http://www.mpr.org)

### Radio K 770

Radio K is the student-run radio station of the University of Minnesota  
330 21st Ave. S.  
610 Rarig Center  
University of Minnesota  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 625-3500  
[www.radiok.org](http://www.radiok.org)

## MUSEUM

### Minnesota Historical Society Sites & Museums

Make the Minnesota Historical Society's 26 historic sites and museums part of your vacation plans. Like Split Rock Lighthouse, Mill City Museum, Minnesota History Center, Northwest Company Fur Post, James J. Hill House and Historic Fort Snelling. They're located all around the state. Learn more at [www.visitMNhistory.org](http://www.visitMNhistory.org)

### Weisman Art Museum

Art is everywhere. You just need to know where to look. Expand your vision. Free admission.  
333 E. River Rd.  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 625-9494  
[www.wam.umn.edu](http://www.wam.umn.edu)

## PERFORMING ARTS

### Children's Theatre Company

North America's flagship theatre for young audiences and families, offering year-round live theatre for ages 2-18.  
2400 3rd Ave. S.  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 874-0400  
[www.childrenstheatre.org](http://www.childrenstheatre.org)

### Cowles Center for Dance and Performing Arts

The Cowles Center is the Twin Cities' flagship for the creation, performance, education, and celebration of dance.  
528 Hennepin Ave.  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 206-3600  
[www.thecowlescenter.org](http://www.thecowlescenter.org)

### Hennepin Theatre Trust

Orpheum, State, Pantages and New Century Theatres  
Twin Cities' best live entertainment: Broadway shows, music concerts, comedy, dance and more!  
Minneapolis, MN  
1-800-982-2787  
[www.HennepinTheatreTrust.org](http://www.HennepinTheatreTrust.org)

### History Theatre

Musicals and plays about the people and events that make up the American experience.  
30 E. 10th St.  
St. Paul, MN  
(651) 292-4323  
[www.HistoryTheatre.com](http://www.HistoryTheatre.com)

### Illusion Theater

Nationally renowned for developing artists and new work while sparking conversation about challenging human issues.  
528 Hennepin Ave., 8th Fl.  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 339-4944  
[www.illusiontheater.org](http://www.illusiontheater.org)

### Jungle Theater

Professional theater producing contemporary and classic works in an intimate setting in the Lynlake neighborhood.  
2951 Lyndale Ave. S. Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 822-7063  
[www.JungleTheater.com](http://www.JungleTheater.com)

### Minnesota Orchestra

Led by Music Director Osmo Vänskä, the Minnesota Orchestra, one of America's leading symphony orchestras.  
1111 Nicollet Mall  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 371-5656  
(800) 292-4141  
[www.minnesotaorchestra.org](http://www.minnesotaorchestra.org)

### Ordway Center for the Performing Arts

Hosting, presenting, and creating performing arts and educational programs that enrich diverse audiences.  
345 Washington St.  
St. Paul, MN  
(651) 224-4222  
[www.ordway.org](http://www.ordway.org)

### She Rock She Rock

Music camps, classes, and supportive performance opportunities for female, trans and gender non-conforming folks.  
5115 Excelsior Blvd. #316  
Minneapolis, MN 55416  
[jenny@sherocksherock.com](mailto:jenny@sherocksherock.com)  
[www.sherocksherock.com](http://www.sherocksherock.com)



### Theater Latté Da

Exploring and expanding the art of musical theater under the artistic direction of Peter Rothstein.  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 339-3003  
www.latteda.org

### Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus

An award-winning chorus that builds community through music and offers entertainment worth coming out for!  
528 Hennepin Ave., Suite 307  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 339-SONG (7664)  
chorus@tcgmc.org  
www.tcgmc.org

### PET SERVICES

#### Animal Humane Society

Adoption, rescue, outreach, training, boarding. Buffalo, Coon Rapids, Golden Valley, St. Paul and Woodbury.  
(763) 522-4325  
www.animalhumanesociety.org

#### Northern Lights Greyhound Adoption

Fall in love again, with a greyhound! Let the matchmaking begin! Call today!  
(763) 754-9754  
www.nlga-mn.org

### POLITICS & RIGHTS

#### Human Rights Campaign

Advocates for all GLBT Americans, mobilizes grassroots action, invests strategically to elect fair-minded individuals.  
P.O. Box 50608  
Minneapolis, MN  
www.twincities.hrc.org  
www.hrc.org

#### OutFront Minnesota

Delivering programs/services in the area of public policy, anti-violence, education, training and law.  
310 E. 38th St., Ste. 204  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 822-0127  
www.outfront.org

### PRIDE

#### Twin Cities Pride

The third-largest national Pride celebration seeks sponsors, volunteers, and board members. Contact us today.  
2021 E. Hennepin Ave., Ste. 460  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 255-3260  
www.tcpride.org

### RELIGIOUS & SPIRITUAL

#### Central Lutheran Church

We welcome all people to discover, celebrate and share the love of Christ.  
333 Twelfth St. S.  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 870-4416  
www.centralmpls.org

#### Edina Community Lutheran Church

Upbeat, growing congregation committed to inclusion, justice, peace, community and proclaiming God's YES to all.  
4113 W. 54th St.  
Edina, MN  
(952) 926-3808  
www.eclc.org

### First Christian Church - Disciples of Christ

A Movement for Wholeness In A Fragmented World.  
610 W. 28th St.  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 870-1868  
www.fccminneapolis.org

#### Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church

It's a new day at Hennepin Church! Vibrant Worship. Authentic Hospitality. Beloved Community.  
511 Groveland Ave.  
511 Groveland Ave.  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 871-5303  
www.hennepinchurch.org

#### The House of Hope Presbyterian Church

A Covenant Network Congregation welcoming all people.  
797 Summit Ave.  
St. Paul, MN  
(651) 227-6311  
www.hohchurch.org

#### Mayflower Community Congregational United Church of Christ

An open and affirming, peace with justice church welcomes you.  
106 E. Diamond Lake Rd. (I-35 & Diamond Lake Rd.)  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 824-0761  
www.mayflowermpls.org

#### Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis

Spiritual, Loving, Relevant, Transforming.  
Find us on Facebook and Twitter  
1900 Nicollet Ave. at Franklin  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 871-7400  
www.plymouth.org

#### Richfield United Methodist Church

The Church of the Imperfect. Engaging worship, wisdom, gratitude, and justice a la Jesus. Join us!  
5835 Lyndale Ave. S.  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 861-6086  
www.richfieldumc.org

#### St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral

Wherever you are on your faith journey...  
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519 Oak Grove St. Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 870-7800  
www.ourcathedral.org

#### United Methodist Reconciling Churches

Congregations around Minnesota that intentionally welcome all people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.  
www.mnrcumc.org

#### United Theological Seminary

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3000 5th St. NW  
New Brighton, MN  
(651) 633-4311  
www.unitedseminary.edu

### Westminster Presbyterian Church

A covenant network congregation, working toward a church as generous and just as God's grace.  
Nicollet Mall at 12th St.  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 332-3421  
www.westminstermpls.org

### SENIORS/ELDERS

#### Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly

Volunteer-based nonprofit organization committed to providing companionship for isolated seniors in the Twin Cities area.  
1845 E. Lake St.  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 721-6215  
www.littlebrothersmn.org

#### Prime Timers - MSP

Providing gay and bi men opportunities to come together for social, educational and recreational activities.  
1730 New Brighton Blvd., PMB 162  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 371-9537  
www.primetimersww.org/ptmsp/

### SPORTS & RECREATION

#### Minneapolis Movie Bears

Social networking organization catering to the GLBT community for movies, theater, games and fun.  
2830 W. 70 1/2 St.  
Richfield, MN 55423  
(612) 327-5340  
www.minneapolismoviebears.com

### SPORTS & RECREATION

#### Twin Cities Goodtime Softball League (TCGSL)

Join 500 GLBT softball players as we celebrate 36 years of gay softball in Minnesota.  
P.O. Box 580264  
Minneapolis, MN  
www.tcgsl.org

### TRAVEL

#### Afton Area Business Association

Explore Afton. Enjoy a day or weekend away. Historic Rivertown. Dining, Shopping, Lodging, Skiing, Golf, Events, Weddings.  
PO Box 102  
Afton, MN 55001  
(651) 436-8883  
www.exporeafton.com

#### Discover Stillwater

The perfect day trip...or weekend getaway! Historic Rivertown. Birthplace of Minnesota. Minutes from Twin Cities. Shop/Dine/Cruise/Nightlife. Stay overnight! Stillwater/Oak Park Heights Convention & Visitors Bureau  
705 Harriet Dr.  
Stillwater, MN 55082  
(651)-351-1717  
www.DiscoverStillwater.com

#### Minneapolis Northwest CVB

7100 Northland Circle, Ste. 102  
Minneapolis, MN 55428  
(763) 566-7722  
mplsnw.com  
info@mplsnw.com  
Located minutes from downtown Minneapolis. Popular destination for abundant shopping, unique restaurants, and FREE Parking.

### Visit Duluth

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21 W. Superior Street. Suite 100  
218-722-4011-1-800-4-duluth  
www.visitduluth.com

### Visit Marshall In Southwest MN

Easy couples getaway. Three hours from the Twin Cities. Lots of locally owned shops and restaurants.  
317 W. Main St.  
Marshall, MN  
(507) 537-1865  
www.visitmarshallmn.com  
info@visitmarshallmn.com

### ZOO

#### Minnesota Zoo

Open year-round. More than 2,400 animals to explore. Numerous special events.  
13000 Zoo Blvd.  
Apple Valley MN  
(952) 431-9200  
www.mnzoo.org





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**Dating Since:** 2010

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**Location of Reception:** Profile Event Center

**Wedding Coordinator:** Michaela Jones

**Florist:** Peggy Bennett, Len Busch Roses

**Cake:** Profile Event Center

**Invitations:** Designed by Geoffrey Brown, [www.geoffreybrown.net](http://www.geoffreybrown.net)

**Photography:** Rebecca Jean Lawrence Photography







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